# THE

# POLITICAL THEATRE.

*Verum ita* RISORES, *ita commendare* DICACES
*Conveniet Satyros, ita vertere* SERIA LUDO,
*Ne quicunque* DEUS, *quicunque adhibebitur* HEROS,
REGALI *conspectus in* AURO NUPER & OSTRO,
*Migret in* OBSCURAS *humili sermone* TABERNAS.

HOR. Ars Poetica, Lin. 225.

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THEATRICAL Entertainments have ever been numbered among the favourite Amuſements of the politeſt Ages and Nations. As they have a powerful Influence in forming the Manners, Morals and Politicks of the People, the wiſeſt Legiſlators have thought them worthy of their beſt Care and Attention. In a well-governed Theatre, Vice is preſented to us in its own native Turpitude and Deformity, while Virtue is not only ſhewn in her loveliеſt, natural Form, but, if poſſible, rendered more amiable, more deſirable, by the Charms of Poetry, and the warmeſt Colourings of the Imagination. The Paſſions, that ſeem to have been placed by Nature in Oppoſition to Reaſon, are here engaged in its Defence. The Senſes, too generally the dangerous Deceivers, Betrayers and Seducers of the human Heart, here impreſs upon it the pleaſing and powerful Ideas of Virtue. Here Wiſdom, Courage and Magnanimity are taught by Examples,

for here the Patriot, who fought, and bled, and died for his Country *(a Conſummation, devoutly to be wiſhed)* is raiſed from his Tomb to act the glorious Part again, and then conſigned to Immortality.

Impoſſible, but an Audience muſt feel the Paſſions, which ſuch a Scene inſpires. They muſt ardently wiſh to emulate the Virtue they applaud; or in the Language of our *laſt* Poet,

> Who ſees him act, but envies every Deed?
> Who hears him groan, and does not wiſh to bleed?

Yet not even from this Inſtance will I acknowledge the ſuperior Utility of the tragick to the comick Drama. In general, its boaſted Superiority is founded rather on that Splendour of Sentiments, that Sublimity of Language, and that Agitation of the Paſſions, unknown to every other Kind of dramatick Writings, than upon any ſuperior Uſefulneſs to the State, for which it ſhould principally be encouraged by the Wiſdom of Legiſlature. In proof of this Aſſertion, Ariſtophanes did more Service to the Athenian Commonwealth by bringing a mock Patriot, a factious Demagogue, and a Leader of Oppoſition upon the Stage, than ever it received from all the pathetick Scenes of Euripides, or the Sublimity of Sentiments and Language, with which Sophocles repreſented his Heroes.

The Opinion of Plato ſhould be deciſive upon this Queſtion. He ſent a Copy of Ariſtophanes his Plays to Dionyſius, the Tyrant,

and

and deſired him to read them with Attention, if he wiſhed to underſtand the Conſtitution, and know the Affairs of the Athenian Commonwealth. The Poet himſelf informs us, that the King of Perſia, after the firſt Queſtion of Ceremony, which he aſked the Grecian Ambaſſadors, made honourable Inquiry concerning Ariſtophanes, and aſſured them, that if the Athenians would take him into their Councils, they would ſoon be victorious over their Enemies.

Surely theſe Proofs are ſufficient to evince the great Utility of Comedy to the political Intereſts of the State. But while we honour our Poet, as a Stateſman, we muſt applaud the Intrepidity of his Spirit, both as an Author, and an Actor, in bringing, like another Hercules, the Cerberus of Athens, according to his own Compariſon, upon the Stage. *Cleon*, the Perſon, who is preſented to us under this Image, was unqueſtionably a Man of Parts and Genius; of Artifice and Intrigue; but neither Experience, nor Application could render him a Man of Buſineſs, or capable of governing the Commonwealth. The Vivacity of his Imagination, and the natural Impetuoſity of his Temper, too impatient to wait for the ſlow Deciſions of Judgment, entered with Violence into his Politicks.

His Eloquence was not ill-ſuited to the Underſtanding of a popular Aſſembly. It was amuſing, plauſible and ſpecious; but was neither perſuaſive, convincing, nor commanding. It was all Premiſſes, without any Concluſion, and not one ſingle *ergo* in a thouſand

ſand Sentences. His happieſt oratorical Talents conſiſted in vehement profeſſions of Zeal for the Welfare and Glory of the Republick, which he repeated with many a ſolemn Appeal to the Gods in Atteſtation of his Sincerity. Theſe Profeſſions had ſuch an Influence upon the People, that merely by their Favour, he was intruſted with the ſole Conduct of the War againſt the Lacedæmonians, which from thence was emphatically, and juſtly ſtyled, *Cleon's War*.

From this Time, he was perpetually exerciſing and indulging his Genius in forming military Plans, Projects, Enterprizes and Expeditions, to which he ſacrificed the general Intereſts of the War, and upon which, by exerting an inſolent Authority over a weak, ſuperannuated, timid Lord of the Treaſury, he laviſhed away the Revenues of the State, with a moſt ruinous Prodigality. When he had unexpectedly ſucceeded in one of theſe Expeditions, (an Attempt upon a little Iſland, called *Sphacteria)* he was ſo elated with his Succeſs, which, in the Pride of his Heart, he uſed frequently to call THE IMPORTANT CONQUEST of *Sphacteria*, that when Sparta ſent Deputies to Athens to ſolicite a Peace, upon the moſt equitable and honourable Conditions, he rejected them with Diſdain, and treated the Ambaſſadors with all his natural Inſolence of Temper.

In repreſenting the Conduct of *his* Generals, for *his* they were, as he alone nominated and appointed them, he had a peculiar Art of magnifying a Skirmiſh into a Battle, and an undecided Battle into a Victory,

for which he ordered a general Sacrifice to Fortune, his Goddeſs and his Patroneſs. Then would he carry a few tattered Enſigns, a Parcel of bruiſed Helmets, broken Drums and cracked Trumpets, taken from the Enemy, in triumphal Proceſſion through the City to the Temple of Fame. Or if the native Intrepidity, and ready Diſcipline of the national Troops, although almoſt totally deſerted by their Allies, had changed a Surpriſe into a Victory, he covered his General's Want of Intelligence with a Profuſion of Praiſes, and applauded him for a Battle he had won, without knowing any Thing of the Matter. Had he been alive in this Country ſome few Years ago, he would have boldly aſſerted in the Senate, *that the Battle of* Minden *was of leſs Importance to* Britain, *than the Victory of* Blenheim.

If another of his Generals, ardent to perform thoſe Services to his Country, which ſhe expected from his Abilities; if animated by Dangers, and catching an additional Ardour to conquer from a Situation, in which any other Commander would have ſunk into Deſpair; if by one nobleſt effort of Courage and Conduct united, he gained a complete, deciſive Conqueſt, and glorioufly for his own Reputation, though unhappily for his Country, died in the Arms of Victory, our *Cleon* modeſtly claimed a Part in his Succeſs, and received the Congratulations of his Creatures for having *called him forth to this Expedition*. Then was it aſſerted in the Senate, that *the General was made for the Stateſman, and the Stateſman was made for the General*. Amazing, that he could ſuffer himſelf to be

thus bedawbed by his vile Panegyriſt with Flattery, as groſs and fulſome, as the Moloſſes of a *Jamaica* Sugar-cane, *Nec pingui donatus munere erubuit.*

However, he ordered a Monument to be erected, at the public Expence, to the Memory of the deceaſed Hero, and aſſumed to himſelf the Glory of pronouncing his funeral Oration, as if he were moſt nearly related to him in Reputation, Friendſhip or Alliance. But, alas! how unaffecting, how inanimate and feeble! As if he were conſcious, that every ſingle Member in the Aſſembly knew the faithleſs Promiſes of Succour and Support, by which his Country's Soldier, her preſent Pride and future Expectation, was betrayed to Deſtruction.

Such was the Character of *Cleon*, when Ariſtophanes exhibited him on the Stage. But ſo formidable had he made himſelf to the Liberty of the Stage, as dear to Athens, as the Liberty of the Preſs to Britain, that no Actor would dare to play the Part; nor could our Author find an Artiſt, bold enough to make a Maſk for it. He therefore daubed his Face with the Lees of Wine, and played it himſelf.

I know the preſent Taſte is paſſionately fond of ſeeing extraordinary Characters brought upon the Stage, and therefore, I preſume that *Cleon* will be ſoon exhibited at one, or perhaps both of our Theatres. Let me then implore our judicious and ſagacious

cious theatrical Criticks to determine, whether ſo valuable a Character ſhould be the Property of Tragedy or Comedy. The Athenians have been juſtly called a laughing People. Laughter and a Love of News, were their national Characteriſticks. Their Religion and its Gods; their Politicks, and the Perſons, who directed their Affairs; even their own Follies and Vices were the favourite Subjects of their Merriment. Ariſtophanes poſſeſſed all the Talents of Ridicule, neceſſary to gratify this popular Taſte. Yet might we not naturally expect to ſee ſuch a Character, as that of *Cleon*, whoſe Love of his Country was an arrogant Ambition to govern it, and whoſe private Reſentment was his public Virtue, exhibited rather on the Stage of Tragedy, than Comedy? Are they, who put on the Semblance of Patriotiſm, and the Maſk of Probity, to act the Parts of Avarice and Ambition; who employ their Talents, Abilities, and Intereſts to perplex the public Councils; are theſe Men to be repreſented as Objects of Laughter only, and Ridicule? No. They ſhould be ſhewn amidſt the Terrors of Tragedy, ſtarting in their Dreams, like Richard in the Agonies of conſcious Guilt, and agitated by the honeſt upbraidings of their own Hearts, even amidſt the Succeſs of their Deſigns, and the Applauſes of their Party.

Or if we are compelled to pay an unwilling Homage to theſe heroic Spirits, who have boldly claimed, and ſucceſsfully gained a Superiority over their Fellow-Subjects: if we are obliged by the Rules of Criticiſm to allow, that theſe important Characters have a right

right to appear on the great Scene of Tragedy, yet in what Species of the Drama ſhall we place the Actors, who are to play the Mob of Faction, the Simpletons of party, and the Dupes of Oppoſition? Where ſhould we have exhibited thoſe profound Admirers of a *Cleon*'s Eloquence and Abilities, who profeſſed to believe, or perhaps, honeſt Simpletons! really believed his Profeſſions of diſintereſted Zeal for the Republic? Such Characters would debaſe the Dignity of Tragedy, or outrage the natural Manners of Comedy. Let them therefore be conſigned hereafter to the extravagant Pleaſantries of Farce, and to that Contempt, which is always mixed with immoderate Laughter.

Many a ſleepleſs, reſtleſs, Night had I meditated on this Subject, and for the Good of my Country, for I too am a Patriot, endeavoured to reconcile theſe Difficulties. I had long obſerved with infinite Anxiety, and at laſt with abſolute Deſpair, that the *three* great Species of the Drama, Tragedy, Comedy and Farce, were rendered, by their being ſeparately exhibited to the Public, almoſt incapable of thoſe important Services, which their being united in one Piece would certainly produce. I ſaw the Neceſſity of uniting them, that their different characters might be brought upon the Scene together. I was convinced, with how much mutual Advantage they would appear, when contraſted with each other. I recollected, that Sophocles, Euripides, and even Plato, had written a great Number of Pieces, in which Gods and Heroes; Cowards Drunkards, Peaſants and Buffoons, are mingled together in the

higheſt tragical Pomp of Sentiments and Language, mixed with the loweſt Ribaldry of comick Humour. Theſe dramatick Pieces were called SATYRS, and my learned Readers will ſee by the Motto of theſe Papers, which, for the ſake of my unlearned Readers, I ſhall tranſlate, that Horace recommended them to the Roman Writers for the Stage, although probably without Succeſs. The Romans had neither that Sublimity of Genius, nor that tragical Dignity of Expreſſion, nor that *vis comica*, ſo abſolutely neceſſary to carry this nobleſt Species of dramatick Writing to its Perfection. But our illuſtrious Moderns, ſo eminently knowing in all theatrical Arts, in the *Coups de theatre* and ſonorous Diction of Tragedy; in the *Jeu de theatre* and politer Dialogue of Comedy, will undoubtedly execute with ſucceſs, what the Romans attempted in vain.

While I deſpaired of ever ſeeing a Set of Actors fit for this great Drama, with what Rapture, what Tranſport did I hear, my Readers too ſhall be rapt; like me ſhall be tranſported, when they hear, that there is, at this Moment, a Company of Comedians, actually formed upon this Plan of the ancient Satyrick Drama, and preparing to exhibit themſelves to the Publick. There are not indeed, any Gods or Heroes among them, as in the ancient Satyrs, but they have this peculiar Happineſs, that many of them have played thoſe very Parts in real Life, which they now intend to perform upon the Stage. They have been Miniſters of State; Secretaries of State, and of War; Lords of the Treaſury, Admiralty, Trade, and the Bed-chamber. They have been Cabinet and Privy-

Counſellors, Chancellors of the Exchequer, with a thouſand, &c. They are therefore always ready in their Parts, and humbly willing to appear again in the Characters, they played ſo long, whenever the people, whoſe ſervants they call themſelves, ſhall give them their royal Licence for acting, as they do not greatly like the uſual Style of our Play-bills, By his Majesty's Command.

Never was there ſuch an illuſtrious Company, ſince Nero was an Actor, and played the Fiddle to the burning of Rome. But as it is cuſtomary to give the *dramatis perſonæ* of a new Play, I ſhall here attempt the Characters of the principal *Comedians*, who are going to make their Appearance in our new Theatre. Let me only be allowed one general Remark, that every one of them, by pure Force of Genius, ſuperior to the mere mechanical Powers of Nature, is able, upon the quickeſt Change of the Scene, to play the moſt oppoſite Parts, while Garrick, that ſervile Imitator of Nature, muſt have at leaſt four and twenty Hours between the *honourable Murderer* Othello, and the *exceeding Honeſty* of Jago; between the *gallant Villainy* of Pierre, and the Lover's Tenderneſs of Jaffier; between the genteel Vivacity of Archer, and the low Buffoonery of Scrub. But now to my Promiſe.

The oldeſt Actor in the Company has held, for many Years, an unaccountable Influence over all the Perſons, who are to make their Appearance in our new Theatre, though they have however prudently reſerved to themſelves, at preſent, a Right of exhibiting their

Talents

Talents on any other ſtage, which the Fate of Politicks, although at preſent moſt unlikely, may poſſibly erect hereafter. He has long been *hacknied* in the Tricks of the Stage, and no Man better knows the mere Mechaniſm of a political Play. Then he can tell, by Experience, rather than any peculiar Sagacity, the Merit, and conſequently the Price, of every Creature belonging to a Theatre, from a principal Performer down to a Candle-ſnuffer, or lower ſtill, to him, who humbly *moves* to light them; from the Actor of a long and capital Part to the Speaker of a ſingle Monoſyllable. Never did Manager more eminently poſſeſs that important Art of filling the Pit, Boxes and Galleries with *Orders*; from whence he could determine the Fate of a new Play, by a ſingle Glance of his Eye into the Houſe. He was indeed an excellent Prompter, and had a peculiar Manner, a *curioſa felicitas*, when an Actor heſitated, or forgot his Part, of giving him his Cue, and the proper Tone for entering again into his Character. He never played any conſiderable Character himſelf, except in the TRAGEDY OF MINORCA, in thoſe Scenes eſpecially, in which an Admiral was ſacrificed to the Honour of Adminiſtration, and a General, almoſt as old, and quite as poor as Belizarius, was ſent a begging, untill he was relieved by the Compaſſion and Bounty of his Sovereign. Still paſſionately fond of the Tumults, the Clappings and Hiſſings, which were once the Delight and Exerciſe of his Youth, our ſuperannuated Player appears, as often as he can, upon the Stage, and rejoices to act the *little* Parts, allotted to him by the Pity and Indulgence of the Manager, now ſuited to the Decay of his Abilities, and the total Loſs of

his

his Memory. Poor Man! He has even forgotten the theatrical Vanity of conteſting for the principal Characters, and is contented to play any ſecond-rate Part to an Actor, with whom, a few Years ago, he would have ſcorned to appear upon the Stage.

Thus the laſt Scene of his eventful Hiſtory
Is ſecond Childiſhneſs, and mere Oblivion,
Sans Teeth, ſans Eyes, ſans Taſte, ſans every thing.

Oh! Quin, how do I revere thy Wiſdom! You quitted the Stage in full Poſſeſſion of all your theatrical Powers, when you were equally capable of charming the Many, as deſerving, what you rather choſe, the Approbation of the Few. You retired, wiſely determined, according to your own humorous Expreſſion, *never to whiſtle the King's Engliſh upon the Stage.*

I have already given, in the Character of Cleon, ſome Features of a very ſtrong Reſemblance between Him, and another Actor in the Company; ſo nearly are the Scenes in real Life allied to thoſe upon the Stage. This Perſon was originally a ſtrolling Player, wandering, till very lately, from Theatre to Theatre, for a better Salary. However ardent his Inclination to acting, and particularly to appearing in ſome favourite, popular Character, yet he publickly declared his Intention of playing any Part the Manager pleaſed to appoint for him, if he were made Pay-maſter general to the Company. This Employment was always thought rather an Object of Profit than Ambition, and therefore not very Honourable. The Manager refuſed

refuſed to give it him, and, from the Moment of the Refuſal, experienced every kind of Oppoſition to his Meaſures for the Good of the Company, which our Actor's natural Turbulence of Spirit, his diſappointed Hopes, and implacable Reſentment, could imagine or deviſe. The ſucceeding Manager gratified his Deſire, and from thence held him for many Years, either a Mute, or a Speaker, as he thought fitting.

Our Actor, it is generally acknowledged, was once a capital Performer, and although not in the full Vigour of his Faculties at preſent; yet the Decay of his Powers is not very perceptible, and is totally denied by his Admirers. However, as he has often played all the various Characters, that enter into the political Drama, from the Solemnity of Tragedy to the Buffoonery of Farce, he is as excellent at inſtructing our young Actors to ſpeak, as Mr. Hart at teaching grown Gentlemen to dance. It is almoſt impoſſible to conceive, how ſoon he forms them to pronounce, with ſomething like an Air of Dignity, thoſe important Words, CONTENT or NOT CONTENT, which occur in almoſt every Scene; or to *repeat*, with proper Emphaſis, and Vociferation, thoſe two far more important Monoſyllables, AY or No. As no Player better knows the Value of a ſteady, and inflexible Countenance in Scenes of ſtrong Aſſertion and Affirmation, ſo he recommends it with Vehemence to his Pupils. Such are thoſe Scenes, in which an Actor is obliged by the Poet to appeal to Heaven, I confeſs, a little too irreligiouſly, for the Sincerity of his Heart, when he profeſſes the fixed, unal-

terable Principles of Truth and Honour, upon which he acts, amidſt a thouſand Variations of Character and Diſguiſe.

But however valuable this Inflexibility of Viſage may be to an Actor, yet when the Scene changes, or the Incidents vary, he ſhould have a ready Command of every Feature in his Face. He ſhould be able to expreſs in every Look, and even in Silence, *et clauſis faucibus loquente geſtu*, thoſe nobleſt of all the human Paſſions, the Love of Liberty and our Country, with which, he would appear to be ſtrongly agitated himſelf, and which he would impreſs upon his Audience.

He ſhould however be cautious of feeling theſe Paſſions too ſenſibly, for certainly too much Senſibility will *mar his Counterfeiting*. Even *in the very Torrent, Tempeſt, and (as I may ſay) Whirlwind of Paſſion*, he ſhould remember, he is only *playing a Part*. I have heard, that Broughton has often declared, he was indebted for many a ſharp Victory to the conſtant Recollection, that he was fighting a Prize, and therefore ſhould never waſte his Strength in Anger and Reſentment for the many hard Knocks he received? Who does not honour and admire in our Bruiſer the manly Fortitude, and philoſophical Command of his Temper, in ſo ſevere a Scene. Let me be forgiven, if I doubt whether there be more than one Actor in our illuſtrious Company, who could ſuſtain his Character, and temperately endure the Buffetings of ſo rude a Part. Yet, in general, an Actor, who would command the Paſſions of his Audience,

dience, ſhould be an abſolute Maſter of his own. To the due Obſervance of this Precept, the Player in Hamlet was indebted for his Excellence,

> Who in a Fiction, in a Dream of Paſſion,
> Could force his Soul ſo to his own Conceit,
> That from her working all his Viſage warm'd,
> Tears in his Eyes, Diſtraction in his Aſpect,
> A broken Voice and his whole Function ſuiting
> With Forms to his Conceit, and all for NOTHING.

I leave the Application of theſe Lines to the Sagacity of our Player, and ſhall only make one Remark upon them, that Actors and Orators, as well as Poets, ſucceed beſt in Fiction. But, perhaps, I have wronged the Gentleman, by imputing to him theſe Feelings and Senſibility of Heart. He may think them a Diſhonour to his Underſtanding, and to that ſtoical Apathy, which ſeems to be the Perfection of pure and unmixed Reaſon. Let us acknowledge, that he really holds a ſtrong Command over the Paſſions, that in general moſt violently agitate the human Heart. I mean the Paſſions of Anger and Reſentment. Is he, to-day accuſed of Perfidy and Inſincerity; of *ſacrilegiouſly tearing out the Bowels of his Mother Country*, yet he ſhall to-morrow take his Accuſer to his Boſom, and cordially receive him into the ſame theatrical Intereſts. He temperately recollects, that he himſelf had often uſed the ſame free Expreſſion of his Sentiments, when he was obliged to play whatever Part the Manager thought fit, for the Stipend he received.

But

But I find, I am enlarging theſe Characters, as if they were intended for future Hiſtory, not merely for Anecdotes of the preſent Day. I ſhall therefore imitate hereafter our divine Milton in his Deſcription of the Pandæmonium. He has contracted his vulgar Devils to a ſize, *leſs than the ſmalleſt Dwarfs*,

> While the great Lords, and Cherubim of Hell,
> All in their own Dimenſions, like themſelves,
> In *cloſe* Receſs, and *ſecret* Conclave ſat
> Within th' infernal Court.

In Imitation of this Paſſage, I ſhall give the Characters, or Pictures rather, of ſome few of our principal Actors, *in their own Dimenſions, like themſelves*, large as the Life, and fit for the Honour of being hung up in the Guild Hall of London, the Chamber of Exeter, and the Common-Council Room of Dublin, each of them with a gold-Box of Freedom in his Hand. I ſhall hang them round with Portraits of our ſmaller Players in Miniature, yet will I not deſpair, and without being thought too much a Flatterer, of preſerving a Likeneſs, even in their Littleneſs, I do not preſume to cry out with Correggio in his Rapture.——*I too am a Painter*—but I hope, I may with Modeſty pretend to taking a Likeneſs, as it is the meaneſt Excellence in the whole Art of Painting. The wooden Portraits, hung up by his Grace's Butler at Clermont, or by the Coachman of a certain right honourable at Hayes, in Gratitude for his not ſelling his Sett of Horſes, are as ſtrong Reſemblances of thoſe illuſtrious

luſtrious Perſonages, as ever were given to the Public by Ramſay or Reynolds.

Shall I be forgiven a little Vanity? I flatter myſelf, I have ſome Judgment in placing the Picture of a great Man in that certain Point of Light, in which it may be ſeen to greateſt Advantage; or of hanging it at its proper Height for exciting the Wonder and Admiration of the Multitude. Neither the Picture, nor the Original, ſhould be approached too nearly. Thoſe Tincts, which appear ſoft and level to the Eye at a due Diſtance, if we view them too cloſely, will be found a mere Heap of Colours, injudiciouſly and even rudely thrown from the Pencil. The conſtant Smile of Affability and Condeſcenſion becomes a broad, Sardonick, Diſtortion of all the riſible Muſcles; and that Air of Dignity, which, at a proper Diſtance, juſtly demanded my Reſpect, upon a nearer View is not a Conſciouſneſs of ſuperior Abilities, which I was willing to acknowledge, but an Inſolence, that very frankly calls me his Inferior. Laſtly, the Colours of inflexible Patriotiſm, and rigid Juſtice, when taken down from their Height, will be found the ſtrong, glaring Dies of Party, Faction and Popularity.

I now return from this my firſt Digreſſion, and ſhall make my Reader ſome Recompence for my Wandering by the next Character in my Dramatis Perſonæ. This Actor is poſſeſſed of all the great Talents, neceſſary for the Stage. His Deportment is truly theatrical; his Action various and animated; his Elocution rapid

and vehement, yet always clear and diſtinct. With ſuch Talents, which might naturally render him worth any Salary to a Manager, he is become abſolutely uſeleſs, and, ſtrange to ſay, almoſt contemptible. From the natural Levity and Inconſtancy of his Temper, the Curtain is often drawn up, and the Play begun, before he has determined what Part he ſhall act. As an inordinate and inſatiable Appetite for Applauſe is the Paſſion of his Life; as he wiſhes to be admired, no matter for Approbation, he would willingly ſpeak every Speech in the Play himſelf, to convince his Audience, how capable he is of ſhining in all its Characters. When he is on the Stage, he is perpetually looking round the Houſe for Applauſe, and if he ſees a Woman of Quality in the Gallery, what prodigious Efforts does he not exert to purchaſe the favourable Opinion of ſuch a Critic? Then ſuch a Profuſion of Tropes and Figures and Flaſhes of Rhetoric; ſuch ſplendid Sentiments, violent Antitheſes, with all of wandering, ranting, flouriſhing, declaiming and

Quitting Buſineſs for a ſhew of Parts.

Yet perhaps her Ladyſhip knows nothing of the intereſting Scene, upon which he pours forth his *ſpecioſa miracula*. But Women of Quality muſt be every where, and a Party is a Party, though it were at Church.

There is yet another of our illuſtrious Dramatiſts, well worth deſcribing, although I am obliged, unwillingly, to confeſs, that his theatrical Powers are not extraordinary. His *Walk* in Tragedy

is much confined, and, Truth to ſay, his Features have no Reliſh in them of comic Humour and Pleaſantry. His Genius was wholly military, and ſuch were the ſtrong Tendencies even of his Infancy to martial Glory, and to Feats of Arms, that his young Heart was charmed, like Deſdemona's, with Tales,

Of moving Accidents by Flood and Field,
Of hair-breadth Scapes in th' imminent deadly Breach.

In his riper Years, he *led*——no; I miſtake——he did *not lead* the Britiſh Cavalry at the Battle of——I forgot the Name——in Bayes's Rehearſal. Elated by the Succeſs, in this Battle, with which he charged the Enemy, he reſolved to buy Dimmock's Horſe, and throw his Gauntlet at every theatrical Coronation, as Champion of his M——y's Crown and Dignity. All his Thoughts, Words and Actions are War. He eats, drinks, ſleeps, and dreams, like a Soldier, *of cutting foreign Throats, of Breaches, Ambaſcadoes, Spaniſh Blades.* He kiſſes the Hilts of a Man of Honour, who loves fighting for fighting's Sake. *Fighting's to him Religion and the Laws.* Then *the big Voice of War*, and the Thunder of the Cannon are in his Mouth, when he gives the Word of Command,

*Sound all the lofty Inſtruments of War.*

He is himſelf no mean Performer upon two of theſe martial Inſtruments, the Drum and Fife. He plays Nancy Dawſon, and the Roſt-Beef of Old England, to a Miracle; but, ſtrange and unaccountable! he never could touch a Note of the Black Joke, to which

which our Regiments of Guards dance their Exerciſe with ſo much Vigour and Alacrity. However, in his too fervent Paſſion for Heroiſm and Heroics, he once unfortunately attempted a capital military Character, in which he was ſo unmercifully hiſſed by the whole Audience, that he has never ſince appeared, nor indeed ever can appear again upon the Stage, with any common Decency. Yet he has lately reconciled himſelf to the principal Actor in the Company, who once held him in utter Averſion and Contempt, but has now taken a huge Liking to him. By this Perſon's Intereſt he ſtill indulges his Paſſion for War, and leads the dreadful Van of Battle behind the Scenes, with eminent Courage and Conduct. *And thus he plays his Part.*

I believe, I may here venture, without any further Proofs, to rely upon the Judgment of our theatrical Critics, with Regard to the public Utility of that Species of the Drama, which is now fortunately recovered from Antiquity, and which I here recommend to their Patronage and Protection. Nor can I doubt of its Succeſs upon the Stage, when ſupported by four ſuch Players, to whom all the Theatres in Europe are incapable of adding a fifth of equal Merit in all the different Characters of their Profeſſion. Let not my Readers however imagine, that there are not other Actors of great Abilities in this new Company. For inſtance, Mr. —— always opens his Orations in that vehement Style and Spirit of oratorical Interrogations, which once were thought peculiar to the Eloquence of Demoſthenes.

Where

Where are the Patriots now, whoſe deathleſs Fame
Immortaliz'd the Greek and Roman Name?
Where do the Demoſthenick Thunders roll?
What Tully's ſoft Perſuaſion charms the Soul?
What Cato vindicates his Country's Cauſe?
What Brutus now the Sword of Freedom draws?
Ah! whither fled, the brave, the wiſe, the free?——

You'll find them all, Sir, at the COTERIE.

Our Orator, from his own native Fire, not in ſervile Imitation of Demoſthenes, would himſelf have anſwered theſe vehement Queſtions, with the ſame Rapidity, with which he had aſked them. How unhappy, that he was interrupted in his Enthuſiaſm by an inſipid, lifeleſs matter of Fact, which no one ever doubted. Beſides, there is a cold proſaick Flatneſs in the Anſwer, that makes it a perfect Anticlimax to the poetical Spirit of the Queſtions ——

You'll find them all, Sir, at the COTERIE.

Now *riſes up* our Orator of Monoſyllables and Adverbs, for Adverbs are all the Parts of Speech in his oratorical Grammar. They are his Nouns, Pronouns, Verbs, Participles, Adjectives and Conjunctions.

On theſe there Things, Sir, when I make a Speech,
I know not, nor I care not, which is which;
But that here Friend of mine is wiſe and great,
And, Sir, in theſe here Times, 'tis He muſt ſave the State.

Theſe two Speeches will give an ample Idea both of the lofty, and the low Sublime. They are the very Top and Bottom of all human Eloquence, and conſequently muſt include all the middling Degrees, if Oratory will allow that Mediocrity, which Poetry diſclaims. My Readers, therefore, will acknowledge, that it is abſolutely unneceſſary to give them any more Speeches; and I have only to deſire them, in their great Candour, to believe, though perhaps it may be difficult to believe, that all the Speeches of all our other Actors are equally excellent.

Here we ſhould acknowledge, that our younger Players have given ſome hopeful Specimens of very pretty Abilities. They are the Spring of our theatrical Year, whoſe budding and bloſſoming, thus early, give Hopes and Promiſe of a fruitful Autumn. With many natural Endowments, ſuch as ſtrong Lungs, and a good Memory, they have nothing of Art to unlearn; no *malus pudor*, no French *mauvaiſe honte*, no Engliſh Baſhfulneſs. There is not [a] youth among them, who, in the Conſciouſneſs of his own Abilities, does not think himſelf, even at this Moment, perfectly qualified to play a Secretary of State, a Lord of Admiralty or Trade; [a] Lord High Chancellor, or a Biſhop of Canterbury.

How-

However, the Gentleman, who is at preſent inſtructing them in his own graceful Action of keeping one Hand in his Pocket, and *ſawing the Air* with the other; whoſe Cares are employed in forming their Elocution upon other Principles, than ever were known to the Ancients, and particularly in teaching them to pronounce thoſe important Monoſyllables, I mentioned, with ſuch a forceful Articulation, that two and two ſhall appear as loud, as twenty: this Gentleman, I ſay, has aſſured them, that they are fit to ſucceed either himſelf, or any other great Actor in the Company, whenever they ſhall think proper to quit the Stage.

This able Performer, to whoſe Direction his Pupils have reſigned their beſt Underſtandings, their Delicacy of Sentiments with regard to Honour and Reputation, had propoſed to open the Houſe laſt November; the Month, in which our political Theatres are generally opened. But whether he had not yet determined, what part he ſhould himſelf play; whether he expected, that ſome Propoſals would be made him, of more Advantage and a better Salary, by another Company; whether the principal Actors, who had often played with him, and therefore, knowing his natural Diſpoſition, ſuſpected him of ſuch a Deſign; whether theſe Actors, now grown more ſenſible of their own Abilities, demanded the Honour of playing ſome capital Characters, which he, well knowing the ſpecial Ridiculouſneſs of their attempting ſuch Characters, abſolutely denied them; whether any, or all of theſe Cauſes concurred

curred in producing the much to be lamented Event, yet certainly the Seaſon was loſt, and the Theatre is not to be opened till next November.

It is at preſent in a moſt miſerable Condition; as dirty, as the Augean Stable, and will require another Herculean Labour to make it tolerably clean. In very Truth, ſo dirty, that a Man of any Cleanlineſs of Ideas could ſcarce endure to put his Head into it. But it will be opened with all poſſible Splendour, and a SATYR, of infinite Promiſe and Expectation, called THE NEW REVOLUTION, will be exhibited with all theatrical Pomp and Decorations. Many of the Scenes are to be painted in the Taſte of a Chineſe Landſcape, as wild, groteſque and whimſical; as charmingly ridiculous, and as unnatural. The Figures in them, like thoſe in a Chineſe Picture, are to be all principal; all to come equally forward out of the Canvas, without Perſpective, grouping, keeping or Compoſition.

Theſe are the comick Scenes, for thoſe of Tragedy are more correct in the drawing, and not leſs highly finiſhed in the Colouring. They are all taken either from preſent, real Life, or from Hiſtory. Such is the Scene of an Election for the Borough of —— not like that of a paltry Mayor of Garret, though exhibited with ſo much Succeſs laſt Summer by the facetious Mr. Foote. No; here we ſee a truly great Man, in the Humility of his Ambition, kiſſing a greazy Butcher, for his Vote, or hugging a Black-ſmith,

ſmoking from his Forge, like another Vulcan, though not the Huſband of a Venus. That might be an Excuſe for ſuch Careſſes; or at leaſt a Pretence for transferring them to an Object more amiable. The next Scene riſes in Dignity, and repreſents the Levee of a noble Duke, with all the proper Decorations of Bows and Thankfulneſs, of Promiſes and Favour. Yet thoſe are called Gratitude, and theſe are Obligations. The third Scene is a triumphal, antimonarchical Proceſſion to a Dinner at Guild-hall, amidſt the hired Applauſes and Shouts of the Mob, in which the great Man throws himſelf half out of his Chariot-Window, in humble Acknowledgment of their Grace and Favour. This is a capital Scene, in which the Hero of the Piece enjoys his own Hiſtory, and like the pious Æneas, *quæque ipſe pulcherrima vidi, & quorum pars magna fui.*

As all the Characters, according to Cuſtom immemorial, are to be new dreſſed, the Reader will eaſily conceive the Splendour and Riches of their Wardrobe, with the variety of Dreſſes, neceſſary for repreſenting all the Nations upon Earth, or, at leaſt, their Repreſentatives, who ſhall come to ſue for Peace, or implore Forgiveneſs and Protection. Theſe Dreſſes every meaneſt Actor upon the Stage can change with as much Dexterity and Expedition, as Harlequin, when he turns himſelf into a Dog, a Lion, an old Woman, or a Wheel-barrow, for his Colombine. Our People, who with equal Wonder and Delight have ſeen theſe Transformations in our Pantomimes, will they not with Rapture, with Exſtacy behold an

Actor, who *lately ſhone conſpicuous in a blue ribbon, conſpectus nuper in oſtro*, now heading a Mob, and huzzaing the Patriot, the Champion of Liberty, home to his Lodgings? Will they not weary their Hands with Clapping, and pour out their Hearts in Applauſe, when the Scene opens and ſhews a Player, who acts the Part of a venerable Magiſtrate, ſurrounded with the ſacred Enſigns of Juſtice, and explaining the Laws of the Land with Abilities, Equity and Impartiality. The Scene changes. He doffs his Robes of Ermin, that Emblem of unſtained and unſtainable Integrity; puts on a party-coloured Coat of the right Exeter Manufacture; throws away his Noſegay, as tall as an Ægyptian Pyramid, and with a ſtrong Hand graſps the Staff of Liberty. Then, whips off the huge Solemnity of his Perriwig; claps me on the Cap of Freedom, and —— *Huzza, Boys, huzza*; WILKES *and* LIBERTY, *and* PRIVILEGE, *for ever. Away, my Lads, away to the Royal Exchange, and hinder Jack Ketch from burning our Libel. Agite, fugite, quatite, Satyri.*

WHEN I mentioned the Wardrobe of our Theatre, I forgot the mighty Apparatus for their new Play. A louder Peal of Thunder never rolled from the deep Muſtard-bowl. Such Lightnings never before flaſhed from Reſin. Yet they have other, metaphorical, Thunders and Lightnings, fit for a Storm of Patriot Eloquence, or a Declamation in Praiſe of Liberty. Their *regalia*, or Enſigns of Royalty, are indeed but indifferent: a Throne raiſed a little, very little,

little, above the Floor; *a pageant Sceptre*; *a rattle of a Globe to play withal*; and ſomewhat like, in Milton's Language, *the Likeneſs of a kingly Crown*. How truly great muſt be the native Dignity, the Powers and Abilities of the Actor, who can ſuſtain this nobleſt Character of the Drama, under ſuch Diſcouragements and Indignities. But as the general Argument of theſe Papers was intended to evince the political Utility of the Stage, I think, it may be not meanly proved, according to the Rule of Contraries, by the Miſchiefs it may produce. Surely then, it may be moſt dangerous to a monarchical State, to expoſe this ſacred Character to the Eyes of the mere Vulgar under ſuch Ideas of Impotence and Weakneſs.

But I return to our Actors and their Wardrobe. They have Charcoal and Rouge in Abundance to mark the Lines and Features of their Characters, yet I would adviſe them not to lay them on too heavily, becauſe, although they appear like Gods and Heroes upon the Stage, yet behind the Scenes, where we ſhall ſee them without their falſe Lights and Luſtres, they will look like a parcel of Fiends. Whoever has been in a Green-room will inſtantly recollect, that he hath ſeen the beauteous Heroine of Tragedy look like one of the Furies, and the fine Gentleman of Comedy, like a Hobgoblin. Then they have provided, as they will probably be wanted in their new Play, a Number of Stilettoes, Daggers and Poniards, Vizor-Maſks, dark Lanthorns, Pocket-piſtols, and a Quantity of white Powder.

If it ſhall be neceſſary to ſeem to repreſent the twelve Judges, they have indeed, at preſent, only one Robe, and one great Perriwig. But they can eaſily make eleven more by this Pattern, whenever they can get Actors to play the Parts. In the ſame Manner, they have only one Pair of Lawn Sleeves for the whole Bench of Biſhops, but the Gentlemen of the Winchelſea Manufacture have engaged to ſupply them with Lawn, for the Freedom of going *ſometimes* behind the Scenes.

It is imagined, that the Houſe will be very full the firſt Night, for the Members of the Chamber of Exeter, the Common Councilmen of London, and thoſe exquiſite Criticks in theatrical Politicks, the Guild-hall of Dublin, have taken all the front Boxes, and three or four Dukes will be obliged to get Places in the upper Gallery, as they did at Othello ſome Years ago. Let us however be thankfull to theſe *very Iriſh* Politicians, who generouſly forget their native Slavery and Poverty, according to their own Accounts, at home, and ſend their Compliments of gold Boxes and Liberty to the Patriots of Britain.

But the Theatre in which our Actors propoſe to exhibit (for the Houſe where they hold their Meetings at preſent is only a kind of Rehearſal-room) is an enormous Pile of Building in the Gothick Taſte of Architecture. It riſes high into the Air, and the Roof, that ſpreads over it, like a Cloud, ſtands upon Pillars, that appear weak, even from their Height, and hardly able to ſupport it. The

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Irregularity of its Parts gives the Spectator an Idea of Variety, and its Vaſtneſs a falſe Appearance of Greatneſs. The Eye, ſtruck with ſome monſtrous Diſproportion in the Parts, forms from thence a Computation of the Whole, and impoſes it upon the Imagination. The Windows *ſhed a dim*, though not *religious*, Light, and their *painted Darkneſs*, if I may venture the Expreſſion, gives them an Air of Awefulneſs and Solemnity. The Ornaments are wrought by Faney and Caprice, without Art or Deſign, and are neither diſpoſed with Judgement, Taſte, or Uſe.

Here let me acknowledge the Promiſe I made of tranſlating the Lines in Horace's Art of Poetry.—I aſk the learned and ſagacious Mr. H——d's Pardon, I ſhould have ſaid, *his State of the Roman Stage*,—which I have choſen for the Motto of theſe Papers. I did not forget my Promiſe, but I was a little at a loſs, where to introduce my Tranſlation to beſt Advantage. If my Criticks, for I hope to be honoured with their Remarks, ſhall think I have here placed it injudiciouſly or unfortunately, I do now authoriſe any two of them, who can agree in Opinion, to alter the Situation of it, in all future Editions, to any other Part of my Work, according to their better Judgement. Having therefore ſettled this important Affair to my own, and I doubt not, the perfect Satisfaction of my Readers, I ſhall only obſerve that the Drama, for which Horace gave the Roman Authors the following Rules, and which I would earneſtly recommend to our modern Play-wrights, was called *Satyr*, becauſe

thoſe extraordinary Beings, the Satyrs, played the principal Characters in it. Our Poet thus deſcribes them.

Though in ſuch Scenes, theſe *laughing*, *prating* Folk
May change the ſerious Mood to Mirth and Joke,
Yet Gods and HEROES, late in ROYAL Gold,
And PURPLE Robes, all gorgeous to behold,
Should never SCULK to TAVERNS, dark and vile,
There to declaim in low and vulgar Style.

In theſe Lines we ſee ſome of the many peculiar Excellencies of the ſatyrical Drama. It exhibits, in one View, not only all the different Species of Tragedy, Comedy, Farce and Pantomime, but has the ſingular Advantage of employing the ſame Actor (we muſt ſuppoſe him a capital Performer) in playing all its different Characters. Then, if he has unhappily failed in a tragical Part of Patriotiſm, he may recover his Honour, and charm his Audience with the patriotick Buffoonery of Farce, or the Geſticulations of Pantomime.

What theatrical Wonders therefore may we not expect from the Genius and Abilities of the Shakeſpears and Otways of the preſent Age; how ſoon ſhall they revive and improve this nobleſt Species of the Drama, when they have ſuch Actors to give their Works to the Public? But ſhall ſuch Actors, the living Repreſentatives of all the Patriots of Greek and Roman Antiquity; they, who

who ſo ſenſibly feel, and ſo powerfully expreſs the Sentiments of Liberty and public Virtue; ſhall they be deemed by the Laws of the Land a ſet of Vagrants and Vagabonds? Shall they be called the Servants of the Crown, and held in vile Dependence on its Authority? Shall the Plays, in which they promiſe to ſhew the various Excellencies of their Profeſſion, be ſubjected, *O tempora, O muſæ!* to the Ignorance of a Lord Chamberlain, or the Caprice of his Deputy, or forbidden to be acted by a deſpotic Prerogative, aſſumed by the Crown?

The Liberty of the Preſs is by all Parties, when they are out of Power, and become Patriots, acknowledged to be ſacred and inviolable. Even its Exceſſes and Licentiouſneſs are not only pardonable, but held in Reverence, as they prove the general, national Liberty. In Right of theſe Privileges, an Author, who has, happily for his Country, turned his Genius to writing Politicks, breaks into your Heart, as a Secretary of State's Warrant into your Houſe; rummages your moſt ſecret Thoughts; ranſacks not only your political, but your private Life; brings from the Depths and Darkneſs of the Grave the Infamy of your Father, from whom you inherit your Eſtate, and the Levity of your Mother, by which you are honoured with the Alliance of Kings. Such is the Liberty of the Britiſh Preſs.

There is another Proof of our national Freedom, upon which I ſhall congratulate this Land of Liberty. To ſuch a Degree of

Per-

Perfection, even beyond the Genius and inventive Spirit of the Dutch, have we carried that moſt liberal Branch of the Art of Painting, called Caricatura, that a great Man can hardly call his Face his own. It is hung up to Sale in every Print-ſhop. Or if he hide his Face from theſe Artiſts, yet any graceful Peculiarities in his Perſon, his Dreſs or Deportment ſhall enable them to give him to the Publick. For Inſtance, a Pair of unpaired Legs, is a ſtriking Reſemblance of a certain Earl. A double-knotted Perriwig, a blue Ribbon, and a reaſonable Breadth of Shoulders, a little bending with Age, will give the perfect Portrait of a noble Duke. The fierce-cocked Hat of a Serjeant of the Guards, raiſing Recruits, and beating up for Volunteers——but I fear it may be thought an impertinent Suſpicion of my Reader's Diſcernment to have mentioned even theſe few Inſtances. A thouſand more might be given. Yet while the Preſs enjoys that Liberty, which is indiſputably founded in the Conſtitution, and confirmed by the Laws of the Land, according to a late glorious Determination in a Court of Juſtice; while our Painters preſume to hang up ſuch illuſtrious Perſonages to be familiarly gazed at by the Populace, ſtill the Stage is enſlaved to mere arbitrary Will and Pleaſure: the Stage, upon which theſe illuſtrious Perſonages would not only look like themſelves, but think, and talk and act like themſelves —*for the Good of their Country.*

But our Actors are reproached with violating the Precept of Horace, and diſhonouring their own Greatneſs, by *ſculking to an*

*obſcure Tavern, obſcuras tabernas.* What! Can there be the leaſt poſſible Obſcurity in a Street, lighted up by the Title of a great Lord in Oppoſition, and conſequently the Friend and Patron of Liberty? Does it not throw a Splendour round it, capable of piercing through the moſt palpable, and viſible Darkneſs? The only Apprehenſion then of Obſcurity much proceed from an Exceſs of Light.—*'Tis but to gaze and cloſe our Eyes in Darkneſs.*

Yet when Horace recounts the Miracles, that Wine, when taken in larger Potation, is capable of performing; when he tells us, it can puſh the Coward into the Battle, *ad prælia trudit inertem*—Oh! that ſomebody had taken his Morning's Draught before the Battle of Minden—or when he aſſures us, that a deeper Beverege will make an Orator *talk* better Eloquence, *quem non fecere diſertum,* an Effect of infinite Importance to our Actors, is it imaginable, if he were now alive, that he could forbid them to go to a Tavern, where Wine and Eloquence will always be vended in equal Purity, unmixed and unadulterated? Would he forbid them to go to Arthur's or Almack's, why then to WILDMAN's? No, certainly. Our Poet full well knew, that Plays can no more be acted with Spirit upon a Draught of cold Element, than good Verſes can be written by mere *aquæ potoribus.*

Yet to ſhew more ſtrongly the Abſurdity of this impertinent Objection, when our Author forbids the Gods and Heroes of his Satyrs to ſculk to an obſcure Tavern, does not this very Forbid-

dence, in all fair Reaſoning, permit them to go Taverns of Honour and Reputation, ſuch as Mr. WILDMAN's, and eſpecially where no naughty Women are admitted? Wine, however, and in Abundance not too ſober, is of the very Eſſence of the ſatyrical Drama. Polyphemus, the Hero of the Cyclops, and Silenus, and all the Satyrs are moſt jovially drunk. In another SATYR of Euripides, for I muſt aſk Pardon of the Learned, who tell us, the Cyclops is the only Play of this Kind, remaining to us from Antiquity, Hercules is moſt comical and facetious in praiſe of the *clinking of Cannekins*. From whence our Company have probably taken his Image for their great Seal of Office: *Hercules bibax*, or *multibibus* reeling under a World of Wine.

There is another Objection thrown out againſt our Actors, yet ſo very trivial, that I am almoſt aſhamed to mention it. We are told, that they declaim and makes Speeches *in low, vulgar Language, the humili ſermone*, forbidden by Horace. Merely to mention the Subjects of their Declamations, ſuch as their Love of their Country, the Rights of the People, their own Privileges, the Liberty of the Preſs, will ſufficiently demonſtrate, that the Sentiments, ariſing in the Mind upon ſuch Subjects, can only be expreſſed in the ſublimeſt Language. Even their Toaſts are of peculiar Sublimity; W——s and Liberty; T——e, and Friendſhip; P—t and Privilege, for ever. Let me, however, acknowledge in that perfect Candour, which I have hitherto preſerved in theſe Papers, that the Word COTERIE is never uſed *que*

*dans le ſtile le plus bas.* Beſides, the Compliment paid to the French Tongue, is, I confeſs, a little out of Character. Why was not Britain honoured with giving a Title to this auguſt Aſſembly of its own Worthies? The Greek and Roman Authors ſhould have been conſulted on ſuch a momentous Occaſion. But impoſſible to give an adequate Idea of them by all the Power of Words. He, who ſaw the Roman Senate look like Gods, never ſaw any Beings like them. Perhaps, the following Story, which I believe has not yet appeared in Engliſh, may give us a better Likeneſs of this illuſtrious Company. When Duke d'Alba was ſent Ambaſſador from Spain to Portugal, he aſked the Portugueſe Nobleman, who was appointed to receive him, whether the Court of his moſt Faithful Majeſty was very ſplendid and magnificent. Yes, my Lord, replied the Portugueſe, beyond all other Courts in the World: we have an hundred Men like you; fifty like me; five and twenty like your Maſter; five like God; and there is beſides my Lord, the King.

I have now finiſhed the Taſk, I propoſed to myſelf, when I ſat down to write. Whether I have in any Meaſure ſucceeded in my Deſign, I know not, but certainly in a Manner very unequal to the firſt Ideas I had formed of my Plan. But here I may poſſibly be told by ſome of my Readers more diſcerning and ſagacious than ordinary, that I myſelf am an Actor; that I too have been playing a Part in my own fantaſtick Drama. I confeſs the Charge, and here throw of the Maſk, which I am heartily tired of wearing. Happy for this Nation, if ſome certain Perſons would as honeſtly

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acknowledge, that they too have long been acting a Part, and would now throw away the Maſk.

But I quit this Language of Alluſion and Diſguiſe. If the Publick therefore ſhall imagine, that the theatrical Characters I have preſented to them, have any Reſemblance to thoſe in real Life upon our political Stage, I ſhall applaud my own Talents in Painting. If not, let the Pictures I have drawn be merely deemed the Works of an idle Imagination. But if there are indeed ſuch Characters among us; if there are any Perſons, who ſet up my Liberty and my Property; nor mine alone, but thoſe of Millions, with all their Poſterity, as Prizes to be given to the beſt Declamation, ſhould they not be perfectly ſatisfied with the little Reſentment of my laughing myſelf and making the Publick laugh at only the ridiculous Parts of ſuch Characters? Shall three or four Dukes, ſome dozen of Earls, as many Lords, with their one Biſhop, aſſure us, that they are a great Majority of the Houſe of Peers, and ſhall I be forbidden to laugh at them, and their Aſſurances? If there were among them all the Abilities, Integrity, Virtue of a ſingle Burleigh, a Southampton, or a Clarendon, theſe Papers had never been written, and never ſhould be publiſhed. Yet theſe Perſons, by the Courteſy of England, call themſelves great Men. They demand Reſpect, and Reverence and Homage. For myſelf, I frankly declare, I never will acknowledge any Man my Superior, I ſpeak not of the common Forms of Life, except the Man, to whom I owe

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ſome perſonal Obligation, or who employs his Abilities in promoting the publick Happineſs.

But to return to my Subject. If Cowardice be a natural Coldneſs and Poverty of Blood, I can pity the miſerable Being, who is oppreſſed by it, as I would in any other Diſtemperature of his Conſtitution. But when I conſider, that Courage is a Virtue ariſing from Sentiment and Senſe of Duty; from a Love of our Country, and a Paſſion, one of the nobleſt, that Nature hath implanted in the human Heart, for Fame and Reputation, I confeſs, I can no longer laugh, when I look upon the Daſtard, who has in the moſt abject Manner ſunk under the Trial of that Courage he boaſted, and even ſtill boaſts. But when he afterwards inſults my Underſtanding by prating of his Zeal for the Conſtitution, for Liberty, and his Country; when he makes many an impertinent Profeſſion of his Senſe of Honour, his regard to Reputation, and publick Eſteem, I cannot look upon him without Indignation and Reſentment, as much, at leaſt, as can be mixed with the moſt cordial Contempt.

Is there a Man of boundleſs Ambition, who attempts to draw to himſelf, from its natural Centre, every Authority and Power in the State; who has long been practiſed, even from his earlieſt Youth, in all the Arts of forming, conducting and managing a Party; who has impoſed upon the Populace by Shews of Virtue and ardent Profeſſions of Patriotiſm —— let the Reader permit me to tell him the

following Story, with which, in Gratitude for his Indulgence, I ſhall conclude theſe Papers.

An Orator, who had formed a conſiderable Oppoſition in Athens to the Adminiſtration of Phocion, once aſked him with an Air of Triumph upon the Succeſs of one of his Orations, "Have I not "finely impoſed upon the People?" Yes, replied the wiſe and honeſt Athenian, you have indeed impoſed upon them, but if ever they recover their Senſes, they will tear you to Pieces.

*F I N I S.*

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